

FORWARD

This history was lovingly and painstakingly compiled by *Ailsa Lewis* – a member since 1975 and past President (1978-79). This task was not easy. She started with an earlier history compiled by *Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun* – charter member, second President (1929-31), past District Governor, and past International President (1941-45). This earlier history covered the period from the organizational meeting in October, 1928 through 1969, a time when the club was defining itself and its role in the community. The document concentrated on the major accomplishments. As a result, some of the “minor” events and details – like the number of members, service hours, or dollars raised – were not mentioned. Even without the mundane particulars, we are left with a true sense of the club’s achievements, the service it provided, and the impact it has had on Dallas. The earliest members were pioneers in their field and women with vision. We owe our very existence to the foundation of service they laid.

We also owe our appreciation to Ailsa, who accepted 1995-96 President *Linda McCalla*’s challenge to compile our history before more of it is lost. Having started with the early history, Ailsa requested and received most of the subsequent presidents’ reports and/or scrapbooks. She used these reports to complete this history. It was a Herculean task to take more than twenty presidents’ reports and interweave them into the history that you are about to read. Ailsa did just that, with grit and determination. Each president has her own style and approach to her report. (For those new to Altrusa – the President’s report is presented to the club during the last meeting of the president’s year. Then, the report is submitted to District as her entry to the Edith DeBusk President’s Award. This award is named for another past International President from our club. Therefore, it means a great deal for our president to win the award.) Ailsa has done an excellent job in preserving each president’s personality in the description of her year.

As you read this history, try to envision each president standing before the club, explaining our accomplishments and occasional disappointments for the year. You may chuckle or become rankled at some quaint or by-gone phrases that may sound odd to your modern ear, because times and customs change as years pass. Altrusa has been able to keep pace with those changes, constantly striving to remain relevant to contemporary society, while providing tens of thousands of service hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars to make life better.

One of our favorite sayings by Altrusa International’s first national president, Mamie L. Bass is “Altrusa believes it is not enough to be good; Altrusans must be good for something.” After you read this history, we hope you agree that Altrusa International, Inc. of Dallas, Texas has been good for something.

Carolyn Rash, Editor
Club History and Publicity Chairman 1996-97
Past President 1989-90

